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# THE JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

## PSYCHOLOGY AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

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### IMAGINATION AS A FACTOR TOWARDS TRUTH

THERE is perchance nothing that would surprise Hegel as much in contemporary philosophy as the decline of the influence of his own teaching. This need not be ascribed entirely to egoism, or to lack of historical perspective, for his amazement would continue, and perhaps increase, were he informed of the objects and enthusiasms of much of our thought. Sobermindedness, precision, the desire to see the world as it is, and to record it as such—these are the objects of our own day, and Hegel would doubtless claim a share in them. Certainty, definite certainty, is our aim; and certainty, absolute certainty, is what he desired.

The variation, slight though it appear, is, of course, the fundamental difference, the unbridgeable chasm between us. The achievement of absolute certainty was the passion, as well as the objective, of Hegel's system; to James it seemed unattainable; to many contemporary thinkers it seems undesirable, uninteresting. The change may be an instance of sour grapes—perhaps having discovered that *the* truth was not to be ours, we have found in relative truths values and delights which do not really appertain to them. Be that as it may, the change has necessitated a more complete break with the past, and with philosophic tradition than James ever envisaged. Thought has been brought down to earth to operate on things earthly, and there to find its fruition. Having determined that it was not for us to know Heaven, it has been decided that Heaven was not for us. Having discovered that *the* truth was undiscoverable, it has been decided that it was not there to be discovered. Having abandoned epistemological discussion as futile, since its problems were unreal, the pragmatist has tended to pursue a policy of negating metaphysics. He has found a genuine and an abiding satisfaction in investigating and attaining values of a more immediate variety. And he has come to regard absolutistic thought as a museum exhibit, of philosophical paleontology, interesting only to a few, and has preferred to recover philosophy for a modern world by dwelling in modern wisdom and living fact.

Problems which interested William James, though he believed them to be without solution, seem to leave his descendants uninterested, and at times disgusted. Perhaps they are, as we have seen, too busy with more pressing, more important problems to give much thought to "the meaning of truth;" perhaps the answer has been found in denying its existence; perhaps—but probably the vocabulary has changed so completely that the problem which could never be answered, can not now even be presented. At any rate, it is certain that no contemporary pragmatist would or could vouchsafe us an answer to James' self-imposed query "What kinds of things would true judgments be, in case they existed?" or claim with James that "the answer which Pragmatism covers is intended to cover the most complete truth conceived of, absolute truth, if you like." The question has no meaning for him, nor would he want his answer to have reference to things which do not exist. It is sufficient if they cover specific cases, if they have application to the data in hand—this they must do, and no more. Indeed, more is impossible.

I do not mean to imply that the basis of pragmatism has changed in any inherent respect. Though the interest in the meaning of truth has faded to nothingness, the accepted meaning of truth remains the same. To quote James once more, true ideas have always been those "which we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify," and their truth merely "means their agreement as their falsity means their disagreement with reality." Yet in so defining truth—and though they do not appear to worry about *the* truth, our contemporaries would, I imagine, define the term essentially this way—we are really expressing a platitude. To assert the relationship of truth and reality and to use such an assertion for purposes of definition, is, it may be argued, somewhat disingenuous. For within this relationship there is such a wide variation possible, due, perhaps, to the very uncertainty inherent in the word reality, that we have hardly penetrated the difficulty, and certainly not illuminated the problem. To say that what is real is true is startling neither as an heretical nor as an orthodox definition. It is startling only when we begin to realize that by so defining truth we have involved ourselves in the meshes of ontology. But we need not so naïvely walk into the spider's parlor. Though we will have occasion later on to consider one phase of what reality is to man, as an active and imaginative being, we may for the present accept James' definition of truth, and employ it as a criterion in judging philosophic enterprise.

But though we can judge the truth and the falsity of all philosophies by the simple criteria which this definition suggests, we may profitably stop for a moment and question whether this is a wise and an honorable method of judging philosophy. If, as Professor Wood-

bridge has suggested, we are to estimate philosophies not by their truth but by their power, is not a consideration of their truth or their falsity irrelevant? Is it not worse than superfluous to give a moment's consideration to their factual strength or weakness? Though our Puritanical instincts warn us to heed them and to apply our yardstick test, even though the scale be variable or uncertain; though our literal-mindedness persuade us that it is difficult to believe that which we know to be false, we yield to this generous impulse. Not by their truth, but by their power! Yes, it is not an easy doctrine, but its rewards are great.

And yet how could we apply it to a man like Hegel? It is easy to judge Plato by this measure, for poet-like, he put his state, his love, his friendship, his everything in Heaven, though he saw their natural bases in Athens. It is easy to judge a mystic by this scheme, for his vision is not of this world, but of another, though he live here with the rest. It is easy to judge all in this way whose philosophies are but an attempt to conceive a universe. But what of Hegel, who is not content with such activity, but preferred to act as recording angel to a spirit which was all-inclusive, and for whom the factitious world supplied an important testimonial? It is easy to judge those philosophies by their power which find their natural basis in this world, if but their fulfilment be truly ideal; but what of the system which makes its basis ideal and its fruition and manifestation natural? Must we not consider its truth as well as its power if we are to see in it aught but a futile, albeit an eloquent, attempt to fit the actual into an ideal and unrelated frame?

It may appear that the distinction between a philosophy with a natural basis and an ideal fruition, and one with an ideal foundation and aiming at a natural fulfilment is somewhat arbitrary. But I think that the antithesis is fundamental and real. To be sure, an ideal of any variety has some, albeit a remote, relation to actuality, and many philosophies aim at an ideal realizable in turn in the world of facts. In so far the two are similar, and may be subjected to similar tests. But we must remember that we are accustomed to judge a philosophy by its fruits, whether real or fancied. Fancied fruits, poetry in short, are, as we have seen, properly judged by their power, by the conviction which they carry. And on the other hand, a programmatic system of thought is rightly judged by its adequacy in specific situations. This variation of criteria on which to base a judgment applies equally well to the basis of thought as to its fulfilment, though for obvious reasons we insist on it with far slighter emphasis. For though a natural basis admits of criticism solely on questions of truth or falsity, this is not stressed since, being natural, it is held to be *ipso facto* true. Conversely, a system

founded on an ideal basis implies ideals sufficiently powerful to stimulate and fortify thought, so that the basis itself is but seldom subjected to this criticism.

A division of this type will result in strange combinations, and will group together systems which can not be associated on any other principle. Platonism, mysticism, all philosophies which contemplate Utopias, be they of this world or another, varying widely in their contact with the natural order and differing fundamentally in their appeal, all these we must classify together by reason of the fact that their goal is ideal rather than natural (though in some cases it may be achieved in fact as well as in fiction), and all will be judged by the common principle of their power and appeal. On the other hand, all philosophies which attempt to apply an ideal to the actual—whether this ideal be derived directly from the natural, or be more or less independent in its origin—which are programmatic in character, will be grouped together and judged primarily by their conformity or lack of conformity to the world and the facts which they pretend to describe. This will include all empirical and all pragmatic systems, and it will also include Hegelism.

Exception may be taken to the fact that I have included Hegel's philosophy in a category whose basic characteristic is programmatic intention. It may perhaps be argued that only a philosophy which aimed at the comprehension and the control of its environment and which formulated a description and a method or plan for influencing it, could properly be designated programmatic, since it alone attempted to give reality a conformity to the circumstances and conditions which it had envisaged in its ideal. And as a postulate to our former arguments only a philosophy of this variety need submit to examination as to its truth or its falsity.

An analogy may illuminate the problem. Let us suppose ourselves at a concert and in the possession of the concert programme. We read the names of the selections, and of the artists—the plan for the evening's entertainment. To judge the programme's validity we must compare the printed list to the actual performance—if they coincide the programme was accurate, descriptive, true; if they vary the programme was inaccurate fictitious, false. Now let us suppose ourselves in the possession of another programme, say one of a performance which we did not witness. It remains a programme though it is a plan of something past, and it is subject to the same tests and judgments as the other.

In this latter sense at least the Hegelian system may also be described as programmatic. It shares some of the characteristics of the former too, since it implies, if it does not always state explicitly, the nature of future events. This was inevitable since the account,

the programme, which Hegel presented aimed at being a description of eternity, as well as a history in time. It therefore has the advantage, or the difficulty of enabling or requiring verification as a history and as prediction. But in both instances the verification will depend on its truthfulness. Hegel was attempting, as we have seen, to apply a theory in order to explain reality, to superimpose on actuality an ideal structure. Therefore it is by the truth rather than by the power of this thought that we must primarily judge him.

It is neither requisite nor pertinent for me to inquire into the individual fallacies and factual errors of the Hegelian system. I have not the ability to do so, nor would much be gained by a campaign of this sort. It may not be taken amiss, however, if I turn my attention for a mere moment to what, I think, may be considered the fundamental fault of this system from the point of view of facts—*i. e.*, a mistaken psychology. The traditional psychology of the early nineteenth century was based on the division of reality into ego and non-ego which found its rise in the Cartesian philosophy. This is the basic argument of the system, the assumption which underlies the whole theory that makes knowledge a mental picture, a more or less perfect reproduction of an objective world existing independently, and apart from it. Thus distinction, as we know, gave origin and meaning to the epistemological excursions of the preceding century. But to contemporary psychology which recognizes only one possible division—and that a somewhat artificial one—between man and his environment and which sees in mind a biological phenomenon, a factor in nature, an instrument to control and to alter it—such a psychology and a philosophy recognizing it can find little meaning in the discussions of realism *vs.* idealism, rationalism *vs.* empiricism. It can not enter them for it speaks another language; it grows impatient with them, for it sees that they are futile since their problems are unreal. I may be pardoned if I enter into a further brief digression.

This behavioristic psychology, which repudiates as too inflexible the Kantian *a priori* method in experiment with its categories and forms of thought operative unconsciously and unreflectively, and insists that all psychological data must be interpreted with reference to activity, can free itself alike from the theories of traditional rationalism and traditional empiricism. It can eliminate the machinery of the Kantian machine-shop which assumes the truth of the empirical up to a certain point in isolated sensations, and then endows thought with synthesizing qualities through some transcendental *a priori* machinery. And in so doing it makes the rationalistic-empirical controversy largely irrelevant. Similarly, it outlaws the conflict between epistemological realism and idealism. It denies the justice of

both the theory of Kant, of Fichte, and of Hegel that mind in knowing phenomena makes them what they are, and the reaction of the realism which holds the creative factor of mind to be an intolerable illusion, coming between truth and ideas which should be avoided in order to see objects as they really are.

It does all this not so much by solving the problems as by eliminating the classical antitheses between Mind and the World; the Knower and the Known; Consciousness and its Object. Instead it recognizes only one antithesis: that of Man and his Environment, and considers mind as an instrument by which man may control and modify his surroundings, and use natural forces for his own advantage. Consciousness is not merely a mirror, so that the question of a similarity between the two has little bearing. Mind is an instrument of control, a factor in man's activity, and so regarded it leaves no room for traditional epistemological considerations.

To return to Hegel, however, though we may regard this fundamental assumption as a basic error, this is not an ultimate indictment. For after all, as Ganz once pointed out to Schelling, you can not destroy a system merely by refuting specific facts. The method and the principles may remain and may be of enduring value and importance. Nor need you damn Hegel *überhaupt* merely because you lack interest in *überhaupt*s, or find it necessary to denominate Hegelism as absolutely valueless just because you have stopped speaking in terms of absolutes.

What else, it may be asked, can you do about it? You have determined that Hegelism, since it poses as a programme after the fact, must be judged by its truth rather than by its power, and you have seen that it must be rejected as untrue not only in its facts but also in its anticipated goal. What more can be said? To answer this question you must recollect the nature of our definition of truth. I assumed that, though less interested in this phase of the matter, contemporary thought accepted James' account of the meaning of truth; to see why this was the proper criterion to apply to Hegelism and to explain in this light why it has been rejected. For, to quote Royce, himself an admirer of much in Hegel, it can not be disputed "that his system, as a system, has crumbled." This in brief has been the content of the above discussion. Much of it may have appeared irrelevant, and this belief may be accentuated when I say that I do not believe that our definition of truth is adequate for our purposes, or that the whole story has been told when a system has been considered from this point of view.

It will perhaps be not unprofitable, therefore, to give a more careful analysis of in how far human experience justifies the pragmatic reliance on the identity of truth and of fact verifiable in ex-

perience. Such a consideration will lead us, I am inclined to think, to ask whether to speak of poetry as true really means anything; and if we agree, as I trust we shall, that poetry is true, whether this type of truth is the same as the truth that two times two is four. Perhaps we will even have to ask whether all facts are true, or whether facts are merely "so." We may have to ask whether the disproof of the factual basis of an ideal invalidated the ideal, or even deprived it of its truth. And finally, we will have to consider imagination as a factor towards truth. This will perhaps lead us to identify truth in its non-positivistic sense with power, so that we can judge all philosophies by a single standard as soon as we have considered the factitious basis of a programmatic system as to its "so-ness." It will be remembered that we are not invalidating our argument which subjects these philosophies to a test of their facts, but are merely adding thereto this further test, of truth defined in terms of human experience rather than radical empiricism. For us, as for Kant, we may find "*nur in der Erfahrung ist Wahrheit.*" A philosophy, perhaps, could be judged both false and good.

Again it may be necessary to indicate that we have not been inclined to accept Hegelism as true in a pragmatic or scientific sense. There may be some who will regard this statement as callow and superficial, with some justice, inasmuch as I made a slight attempt to substantiate this opinion by a necessary reference to specific fallacies or errors. My only reply to them would perhaps be an appeal to authority. But I will not even attempt a reply; rather I will go on to consider the system from another, and it seems to me, from an infinitely more significant view-point. As a product of human imagination the Hegelian system has had an almost unexampled influence on human imagination, and what will appear more important to some, it has had an influence on human activity which has by no means ceased to exert its force.

It must not be thought that in thus characterizing this philosophy I am endeavoring to cast a prejudicial flavor into my criticism. Imagination is an essential factor in any constructive enterprise, as a matter of fact, which aims to affect the conditions of human activity. This may have reference to an actual transformation or it may only refer to the formulation of a plan or a programme whereby such transformation might be accomplished. In either of these senses imagination is fundamentally a scientific instrument, though only in the former case is the instrument adequately tested. Whenever man acts, and does so consciously with reference to some purpose to be accomplished, he is said to be acting intelligently because he has shown himself to be an imaginative creature. Whenever he thinks, and thinks in terms of a world different from the one in which he



finds himself, but which he envisages as a possible or perchance the only possible outcome of the present world, then he is likewise an imaginative creature. If his judgment is sound, if his prophecy is found to be a correct prediction, then he may be called scientific. It should be evident that I do not believe that Hegel was scientific in this sense, that he had this variety of imagination. My purpose in sketching it was frankly to gain for the imaginative function that sober respectability which is so often denied it. Surely as a scientific instrument no one would deny the respectability of imagination. And perhaps it will be allowed to carry this virtue over into other fields.

For the imaginative function, though it necessarily always operates on the material offered by experience, and in terms provided by experience, is capable of producing results only remotely related to the natural order and of conceiving worlds utterly apart from this world. Such constructions we properly designate as fiction and put them into a new and a separate class. But though they vary it is evident that the products of a common function are related, and that when considered together the one is capable of illuminating and clarifying the other. Nor is their similarity confined to a common originator; they likewise share a common origin. For fiction is necessarily based upon fact, the ultimate elements of an imaginative structure are inevitably supplied by experience. It can not be otherwise.

How comes it then that the offspring of the same parents, nourished in the same surroundings and occupied in not dissimilar operations, are treated so differently? Why is it that we regard the one with sober respect, and the other with suspicion, though it be a fond and sympathetic suspicion? Or, if we deal less harshly, why do we still insist on careful isolation? In short, why do we ascribe truth to those products of the imagination which have reference to our own immediate surroundings, and not to others?

Granted that James was right in saying that "the true is only the expedient in the way of our thinking" there still appears to be no obvious reason why we should make factuality an innate and essential characteristic of all truths. For unless we wish to regard expediency in its very narrowest meaning, as something which will provide results with the least effort, we are obliged to regard it in well-nigh its broadest meaning, as something which will provide the greatest eventual benefits. In this sense, it retains all that is most consistently interested in progressive operation, and it retains its pragmatic bias in favor of effective influence on human events. But it recognizes the importance of the non-factual, and the influence which it exerts on man's activity. It recognizes that belief as well

as knowledge is power, and it seeks to stimulate and to foster those beliefs which will increase power, which will insure benefits, which, if you will, are most expedient.

Such an attitude, to be sure, requires no radical reconstruction of our present ways of thinking; it merely recognizes an existing state, and believing that it can be put to better and to more desirable uses, it seeks to control it, to make it part of the life of reason. But though it implies no signal departure from most of our ways of doing things, it will, I think, alter to no small degree our judgment of things, and the criteria by which we seek to affect these judgments. Quite specifically, it will require a redefinition of truth on a more adequate basis, or it will at least necessitate the establishment of a new term of approbation as a substitute for truthfulness.

I am inclined to believe that the former alternative would be preferable. Words by their use, whether this be logical or no, gain for themselves qualities which did not originally appertain to them, and which are not perhaps inherent in them. To some who are excessively literal-minded, these accessory meanings, these peripheral implications seem faulty, since they are adventitious. But to others it would seem that, though the product of accident, these secondary meanings are valuable and useful, and that far from deserving to be discarded, an intelligent understanding would seek to conserve and employ them. In general we may say this condition arises from the attachment of emotional, or at least an extra-rational significance to words. It is for this reason perhaps that the majority of terms usually associated with religious activity have gained this state, so that, in Wordsworth's phrase,

". . . the soul  
Remembering how she felt; but what she felt  
Remembering not, retains an obscure sense  
Of possible sublimity."

Gradually these qualities tend to become the fundamental and most important part of the word's meaning. It is for this reason that in the attempt to analyze terms such as these we discover that though their use has given us all essentially the same emotions, we mean rather different things by them. The discovery naturally arouses our suspicion, and the obvious temptation is to solve the problem by ridding ourselves of the troublesome word. This solution, however, is enormously wasteful. In attempting to practise it, we are disinheriting ourselves of a priceless birthright to ancestral activity.

The danger is manifest in respect to the word "truth." Under idealistic auspices it had received an aura of excellence, it had become a quality to be predicated of perfection, and of nothing less.

The custom had its dangers, but it also had its benefits. The dangers arose from a predisposition to regard truth as static, and hence to assume that growth and progress were not to be accomplished. In its attempt to rid philosophy of this danger, positivistic and pragmatic thought has, however, also deprived it of the benefits of seeing in truth an ideal to be worshipped and striven for. And, ironically enough, pragmatism has thus been inclined to deny to man a useful instrument and a practical aid.

The question naturally arises how this discussion can have relevance in considering an idealism which would not have recognized truth in these terms, even though it would have recognized truth with these qualities and virtues. And, in turn, this confronts us with a larger question of the propriety of trying to judge a philosophy in any but its own terms. We have heard much about the need for understanding thought in relation to the period and conditions which gave it rise, and no one surely would question the advisability of such a course. To understand answers we must first understand questions; to comprehend a philosophic system it is necessary first to comprehend the interests, enthusiasms and prejudices of the times in which it was given birth. And it is equally necessary to have an insight into the life and the character of the thinker. Without this, adequate appreciation is impossible; without adequate appreciation we can not hope to gain insight; without insight we are blind. But when this method goes so far as to tell us that all philosophic systems are true, that two answers to the same question uttered simultaneously and differing diametrically are both true, then we must indeed turn skeptics.

For judgments and understandings are not synonymous, and though both are prerequisites to intelligent criticism, their objects are by no means identical. Nor are their methods. If we must seek to understand a philosophy in its own terms we must judge it in our own. This is not a counsel of perfection; it is inevitable as well as desirable. For we can not free ourselves from the interests and enthusiasms of our own times, and even less can we cast aside the controlling activity of our character and education. If we could do this, criticism would not only be dispassionate—which of course is desirable—it would also be devitalized.

This then may be my excuse for attempting to measure Hegel in the initial pages of my paper in accordance with a pragmatic and scientific standard. It will likewise be my excuse for applying to him the test of truthfulness, using the word in a sense which he would recognize as little or even less than the former. For him, the true was the absolute and certain; for James it was conformity to

reality; for us it will be the powerful, the effective in promoting human action.

It will, therefore, be advisable first to consider what the relation is between the pragmatic and the humane attitude. In how far will we continue to recognize scientific facts as true, and what relation will factual records have to truth? An illustration of a rather exaggerated character may serve to preface my argument.

The fact that we apply the same name, history, to the sequence of events, and to their written record, does not obscure the very real difference existing between them. That this is not entirely accidental, that it is inherent in the situation, must be evident. For lack of information, or actual misinformation, causes the very fewest variations. They arise chiefly from the fact that the function of a historian is necessarily selective, and that he is therefore obliged to give to his work emphases and connections which are not always found in the original. This is not the fault of history, unless we take an exclusively empirical point of view. The virtue of history as an educational instrument consists especially in the fact that it can make those things into a connected and correlated narrative which were formerly dispersed and diversified. Written history is inaccurate, since it can never attain complete pluralism; it is effective because of its unreal unity. But be that as it may, we know at any rate that written history is not a mere reproduction of facts. The problem, therefore, will suggest itself as to how great variation is justifiable. The answer obviously should be based not on *a priori* grounds but on a consideration of the educational value of history, and on the need of the persons that are to be educated. For history is not merely written of people; it is also written for people. Granted that it is to act as an inspiration as well as a warning, must we not consider the kind of inspiration and of warning required? This perchance is the justification of glorified history. If history is partly fiction, anyhow, why not make it the best possible fiction? Why not make our heroes more divine, and our failures more significant; why not use our imagination? The illustration may be fanciful, but it can not be silenced summarily. For it is essentially scientific procedure. It is entirely analogous to the action of the physicist who assumes his perfect vacuum, or of the chemist who insists on the truth of  $H_2O$  as the formula for water. Both of these are radically contradictory to the testimony of experience, yet they are assumed to be factual, and hence are denominated true.

Whether their truth should be an immediate corollary to their factuality is a problem which need not detain us long. We may seek to dispose of it in two ways. If we refuse to regard science as a mere truth factory, through whose operation falsehood is dis-

carded and truths are assembled, and if we are willing to forget for a moment our prejudice in favor of regarding all that is not strictly scientific as smacking of untruth and perversion, we may succeed in rendering an invaluable service to science. For if we have an adequate appreciation of the value of the scientific endeavor and point of view, we will be unwilling to hamper it with irresponsible epistemological implications. We will seek neither to establish the identity nor to insist on the opposition of the true and the factual; we will simply admit that the question is irrelevant. There will, of course, be no doubt as to the definiteness and certainty of our knowledge when based upon scientific principles. This will be complete as always, rational as ever, and having pragmatic sanction. But it will be the case not because of any superior reality or truth inherent in these products of experience, but merely because confirmation is possible, because the facts support the case. Science's natural basis will, therefore, be nature itself. Its ideal fulfilment will be a complete and accurate understanding of its own basis. Fact and truth will then not be thought to have anything to do with each other. But, clearly, this would dodge the issue.

On the other hand, we may make our consideration of factuality and truth dependent on our assumption that truth is a quality to be predicated of those things which influence human activity. Facts, since they are the results of an analysis of a world previously considered as a unified whole, if considered at all, are also portions of the controlling and determining structure of all activity. In this somewhat negative sense, at least, we are justified in ascribing to facts the quality of truthfulness, and in some cases facts are endowed with an enormous fund of influence over human actions, and hence with an enormous amount of truth. Thus the nature of the solar system influences all man's behavior, continually and in specific manners, but for Galileo it was possessed of a superior and more compelling variety of truthfulness. This latter type, moreover, corresponded in a signal degree to what we may designate as religious faith and passionate certainty. A man's suffering for his convictions on astronomy is not to be ascribed to stellar arrangements, and, on the other hand, the sun and the moon and the stars are but faintly concerned with the truth of the law of gravitation. And the nature of truth about constant facts may vary, though the truth remain the same; for truth is an attribute of things, but its significance rests with men.

Yet even though knowledge and imagination both mean power they are not to be considered identical, and though we may predicate truth of the objects of the former, as well as of the products of the latter, since both influence and stimulate man to act, it is clear that

fact and fiction must be held separate. And since the realm of fact is determined to a large extent, whereas the realm of fancy is undetermined and is continually being created by man's imagination, we must see to it that for the advantage of each, and hence for the benefit of man, the kingdom of fiction be kept within bounds.

It might of course be possible voluntarily to restrict our investigations of fact and hence uphold the domination of fancy, but though the attempts to do this have been frequent and ardently supported, they have but seldom met with success. And well so. For though we can limit our knowledge of facts, we can not limit their effects—unless, indeed, we cease to limit our knowledge. We can not keep both our ignorance and our power, and it is not to be wondered at that we strive for the latter. The limitation of scientific investigation might have some benefits, but it would be fatal. Science alone can fix its own bounds and limit its own activities if it is to be effective and progressive. We must not seek to restrain it. We must not; indeed we can not.

But this by no means destroys the importance of the imaginative function, nor does it even restrict its operation to that field in which, as we have seen, it is the henchman of the scientific investigator and of the practical reformer. For scientific investigation always leaves some worlds for the imagination to conquer. In the first place, there are always those spheres which, in its advance, it has not reached, and whither imagination, since it is less heavily armed, and since its line of supplies is more easily maintained, may always travel far in advance. Its only restriction is really its starting point and its tools, namely, life and the materials offered by experience. Its triumphs are fantastic, bizarre and attractive. They have their place in a rich and well-ordered world. But clearly, these products of the imaginative function can not be enduring as such. Science, though it is a slow and a ponderous traveller, will certainly overtake them and they must yield it their dominion. Like all enterprises which do not voluntarily restrict themselves beyond the restrictions of complete necessity, which do not cherish the lamp of obedience for the sake of its light only, they gain the privilege of license, but they suffer its consequences.

There is, however, another field in which the imagination may properly operate, and it is to this that I would in closing turn my attention. Its area is smaller than that of the realm which we have just been considering, but its soil is more fertile, and though its products are perhaps less luxuriant I believe that they are more wholesome and enduring. This realm contains those things which science has rejected as non-existential. One advantage will immediately be evident. Whereas the field which science has not invaded

is always growing smaller, the number of things which science has rejected is continually increasing. And there are other advantages, too. There will be fewer dangers to human progress when imagination plays in this province. There will be no tendency for imagination, whose fondness for her wards, religion and idealism, is notorious, to attempt to combat science, for science will be no longer trying to dispossess her. It will call on her for her services which, as we have seen, it invariably needs; and when it is done with her it will let her frolic.

But I have been lapsing into excessive metaphor. And, what is even worse, I have forgotten Hegel. What reference can a discussion of imagination, functioning on material which science has rejected, have to his writing? Clearly, he would have disavowed any intention to avail himself of this subject matter; and equally clearly he would have denied any correspondence between the dialectic process and what he might have denominated "*die Methodelosigkeit*" of the imaginative function.

To what part of Hegelism, then, may our discussion have application? Obviously, it has no relation to those unnumberable judgments and statements concerning history and the world of nature by which he sought to establish the existing order, social, political, and religious, as marking a climax in the world process. Though many of them have been taken exception to, and though some of them have been disproved, they still form a substantial testimony to his rare insight and his extraordinary versatility as an interpreter of history. Almost as obviously it has no relation to the dialectical method, though it, like all other methods, might well be judged by its ultimate results on man, as well as by its immediate products. It is, however, to the absolute *überhaupt* that I would turn my attention, as a concept which has been rejected by science because it has no existential or factual validity.

I have, then, admitted that I never saw an absolute, and never hope to see one, for the mere reason that absoluteness is not a quality which is found to exist in this world. On its acceptance, however, would depend in the last analysis, one's attitude towards the Hegelian system. For though one could accept verbatim Hegel's evolutionary and dialectic-evolutionary theories, if one rejected the concept of absoluteness one would cease to be an Hegelian; and, on the other hand, though one modified and altered all else, if one retained this one might properly claim to be a follower of Hegel. If one's vision, therefore, is restricted by the horizon of the natural order, one will perforce reject Hegelism as untrue in a scientific or pragmatic sense. But what of its truth considered from the point of view of its influence as a structure of the imagination on man's

career? If we grant that the absolute does not exist, what may we conclude of the power of an absolutistic philosophy on man?

There would be few who deny that it has in the past been an extraordinarily controlling factor in determining human activity. It is difficult however to go further than this. It is almost impossible to generalize as to the value or the virtue of its influence. Only one thing as we have seen is certain. In the judgment of absolutes, since their factuality is no longer claimed, they become part of the kingdom of the imagination and must be judged as such. Are they, then, effective in determining human destinies, and do they tend to promote progress, to benefit man?

As in all else, we may well make our judgment of absolutes relativistic. We may discriminate and determine which absolutes will pass our test, in which our criterion of virtue is a beneficent influence on human behavior. Surely then we need not share Socrates' uncertainty, who—as he tells us in the *Parmenides*—"sometimes grew disturbed, and began to think that there was nothing without an idea" and that even "such things as hair, mud, dirt or anything else that is foul and base" had its absolute counterpart in Heaven. Such ideals we will reject as unworthy and false, and we will retain only those typically Platonic ideas such as absolute beauty, truth, and goodness. For these are the things that stir man's imagination, that stimulate his enthusiasm and rouse him to energetic activity. He may believe in their excellence and desirability, and may strive to attain them. They will determine his every action, and guide each effort. They will evoke his whole-hearted admiration and aspiration; he will worship them, and hold them to be most important and most real.

For whether man be or be not the measure of all things he is certainly the measure of reality. He alone engages in metaphysical enterprise, the results of which are significant for him alone. They determine his behavior, and give him those characteristics which we long to call typically human because they are typically divine. We need claim no existence for them, but that will not make them less significant or less real. Nor will we be obliged to talk disparagingly of "mere" existence, for since the test and the proof of our ideals are necessarily found in their influence through man on the natural order, we will have done them no service by condemning this order. Rather our ideals will teach us to prize it more highly. Here then we have a reality of an ethical rather than a metaphysical import. It is truly humanistic for its test and its justification is human faith and the power that faith gives, its proof is human improvement and advantage, and its origin is human creative imagination.